

WINTER SAFETY BRIEFING GUIDE



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WINTER DRIVING

Dealing with Fog

According to the National Transportation and Safety Board, there are about 700 fog-related highway fatalities each year. The best advice for handling heavy fog is to stay home and wait for it to lift before traveling. If you cannot avoid traveling during foggy conditions, there are a few basic safety tips you should follow. They are:

- 🕒 If you must drive in fog, allow more time for your journey.
- 🕒 Check and clean your windshield, windows and lights before driving. Use your windshield wipers and defrosters at all times. Using your air conditioner in conjunction with your defrosters works best.
- 🕒 See and be seen. As a general rule, drivers should use low beams only.
- 🕒 If you drive into a patch of fog, slow down gradually so the car behind you has time to slow too.
- 🕒 To heighten your awareness in your murky surroundings, open your window part way and turn off the radio.
- 🕒 Maintain a safe following distance from the car in front of you. Leave yourself plenty of room for stopping. You should always be able to stop within your range of vision.
- 🕒 Slow down and keep to safe speed. Don't be tempted to keep up with the vehicle in front of you, as it can give a false sense of security.
- 🕒 Don't speed up to get away from a vehicle which is too close behind you, and always resist the urge to overtake as you may find

visibility ahead in much worse than you actually think.

- 🕒 Stay patient. Do not pass.
- 🕒 Don't hunch forward over your steering wheel. You'll see better in your normal driving position.
- 🕒 Use the right side of the road for guidance.
- 🕒 If the fog gets too dense, pull off the road, leave your headlights on, start the flashers, turn on your interior lights, and sound your horn occasionally.
- 🕒 Remember that fog can drift rapidly and is often patchy. People often think that fog is clearing and suddenly find themselves back in thick fog.
- 🕒 Turning at an intersection in fog needs particular care. Open your windows so that you can hear oncoming vehicles. Use your turn signals well beforehand and while waiting to turn. Keep your foot on the brake pedal so that your brake lights are on as an extra warning.
- 🕒 If possible, find an off-street parking space for your car and never leave it on the "wrong" side of the road.
- 🕒 If your vehicle breaks down, get it off the road if you can. If you can't do this, make sure you turn the hazard warning lights on.

Water Skiing on Four Wheels

When it's raining, drivers don't often recognize the hazards -- until it's too late. Hydroplaning occurs when your tires lose contact with the road and ride on a layer of water between the tires and the road. You may not even realize it's happening until you try to maneuver and find you're not in control of your

vehicle. Your chances of hydroplaning are effected by a combination of circumstances:

- Water volume. Although hydroplaning is more likely with half an inch or more of water on the road, even moisture from dew or fog can create conditions ripe for hydroplaning.
- Speed. Partial hydroplaning can occur at speeds above 30 mph. At speeds above 55mph, your tires may lose all contact with the road.
- Tires. Good tire tread can reduce your chances of hydroplaning. Tread grooves should be at least 1/16 of an inch deep. Check your tires periodically by placing a penny in a tread groove with Lincoln's head upside down. If the top of his head shows, it's time to get new tires.
- Vehicle Weight. A lighter vehicle gets less traction and increases the risks of hydroplaning. Also, if too much weight is concentrated in the front or rear of your vehicle, you are more likely to hydroplane.
- Road Surface. A smooth surface or roads that accumulate a lot of water create ideal hydroplaning conditions.

The chances of your vehicle hydroplaning are greatly increased after heavy rains, when water has had time to accumulate on the road. Because of the high level of rainfall that we have in this region, you can't always avoid hydroplaning. When your car starts to hydroplane, there are some simple things that you can do to help maintain control:

- Follow the tire tracks of the car in front of you.
- **Don't** steer, brake, or accelerate abruptly.
- Slow down and increase your following distance.

- If you hydroplane, remain calm, ease off the gas, avoid braking, and steer straight. If you do skid, steer in the direction of the skid.

- If you must brake, do so once your vehicle regains contact with the road. Pump your brakes to avoid skidding or brake lockup. Cars with antilock brakes should keep continuous pressure on the brake pedal.

There is also a simple maneuver that can help you to maintain control of your vehicle at higher speeds when there is standing water on the road. By shifting your vehicle's position from the center of the lane to one side of the lane, and straddling the puddles, your tires will always have better traction up on the higher road surface. A cool head, common sense, and knowing what to do can help you react properly and prevent a disastrous mishap.

Preparing Your Vehicle for winter's Worst!

During the winter, inclement weather and resulting unsafe road conditions add to the unusual hazards of driving. Normal safe driving habits should be modified to allow for these changing conditions. To insure safe winter driving, practice these safety tips:

1. GET YOUR CAR READY FOR WINTER. *Either check it yourself, or if you are not familiar with automobiles, have it checked by a qualified mechanic.*
2. CHECK YOUR BATTERY. *Don't take it for granted that your battery will see you through another winter. Battery power goes down during cold weather conditions. Get a charge if you need it, or maybe it's time for a new battery.*
3. CHECK YOUR BRAKES. *Good brakes are a **MUST** for winter safety. Have the equalization checked. A pull to one side can create a dangerous skid.*

4. PUT SNOW TIRES ON BEFORE THE SNOWFALLS. *Although studded snow tires do provide improved traction and braking on icy roads. They are not nearly as effective as reinforced tire chains for improving traction and braking on all winter road surfaces. Plus the fact that studs is illegal in many areas. Normally the best combination for winter driving is using snow tires and keeping a set of reinforced chains in the trunk for severe road conditions.*
5. CHECK YOUR WINDSHIELD AREA. *Wipers should have adequate arm tension; worn blades should be replaced. Use an antifreeze windshield solvent in the washer system: make sure your defrosters do the job. **Always ensure your windshield is cleared prior to taking off to eliminate blind spots.***
6. HAVE YOUR MUFFLER AND EXHAUST SYSTEM CHECKED. *A faulty exhaust system could mean disaster, have the entire system checked for leaks. **Carbon Monoxide Kills....***
7. KEEP WINDOWS CLEAR. *Front, rear and side windows should all be cleared, Remember danger comes from all directions! Brush all snow off before you start out. Don't be a peephole driver, this only works in submarines. Don't forget to clean the air intake in front of the windshield and from the wiper blades if they are frozen.*
8. ROAD SPLATTER, SLUSH, AND SALTED WET ROADS CAN GREATLY REDUCE VISIBILITY. *Use windshield washers and wipers frequently. When driving at night, stop occasionally to clean headlights and taillights. Headlight efficiency can be cut in half by road splatter.*
9. IT'S BEST NOT TO DRIVE IN FOG, SLEET OR HEAVY SNOW, BUT IF YOU

MUST: Keep your headlights on Low beam, high beams create more glare and use them even during the day.

10. DRIVE WITHIN OR BELOW THE LEGAL SPEED LIMITS. *Speed, fast acceleration, and abrupt steering movements are dangerous in the winter driving. Sudden lane changes or sharp turns can put you into a spin. Drive according to the conditions.*
11. YOU CAN'T STOP ON A DIME WHILE DRIVING IN SNOW AND ICE. *If you try it, you'll spin for sure. Slow down gradually, well ahead of intersections where the going is usually slippery! Starting and stopping at crossing has a polishing effect on the ice and snow packed road.*
12. GIVE YOURSELF PLENTY OF TIME AND SPACE TO STOP, NEVER JAM ON THE BRAKES. *You'll only go into a skid. Pump the brakes with hard rapid jabs. That way the wheels will keep rolling and you will be less likely to lose steering control.*

Black Ice!

*When it's forecasted for temperatures near freezing, always expect **BLACK ICE.** Remember bridges and over passes freeze up before and remain frozen longer than other road surfaces. Also don't don't forget those shaded areas of road – they can and do hold treacherous ice patches. The following tips are especially relevant to county roads and need to be stressed:*

- *Be exceptionally wary during early morning and late evening when road icing is most likely to occur.*
- *Icy sections are most likely to be found on and under bridges, on high sections of roads, at the tops of hills exposed to wind,*

in valleys and forest, and on roads near rivers, lakes and along foggy areas.

- *When driving on a wet road, there is always a strong possibility that black ice may lie ahead.*
- *Once on an icy section, do not accelerate, brake, gear down or make a sudden change in steering direction. Keep a safe distance from other vehicles.*
- *If you should get into trouble, try to steer to the edge of the road. Sand and salt from previous road “dustings” may have blown to the road edges by past traffic and will you help you regain control.*
- *Finally, the best advice for driving in Washington in the wintertime is the same as it is anywhere – Slow down and drive with care. Driving too fast allows you less time to react and reduces your chances of recovering from a mistake.*

Slippin’ and Slidin’

Weather- related hazards play a significant part in the increasing traffic mishap rates. Snow and ice on roadways, combined with increased traffic, require drivers to be even more vigilant than usual. Darkness falls much earlier during the winter months, which also increases the chances of traffic accidents. Piles of plowed snow and parking lots make deliveries more difficult. To add to the hassle, drivers may be physically below par in the winter due to frequent colds and flu, extra activities at home, and off-duty holiday celebrations.

Failure to keep your distance and provide yourself with a way out can add to the holiday problem. You may be driving safely, but what if someone ahead of you is speeding or distracted?

Winter driving conditions put more strain on vehicles no matter what traffic problems drivers may face: so it’s important to make sure that your vehicle doesn’t break down and complicate things. Be sure to check your headlights and taillights for alignment and brightness. Replace worn out windshield wipers and keep the fluid system filled—if you can’t see a hazard, you can’t avoid it. Make sure you have emergency tools and materials in the trunk for unexpected trouble. These include a flashlight, flares, battery cables, an empty gas can, blankets, work gloves, a bag of sand, and a shovel.

Winter Car Kit

The following comprehensive equipment will help you keep WARM, VISIBLE, and ALIVE if caught by a winter storm:

- **Blankets or Sleeping Bag** – *For each occupant of the vehicle*
- **Extra Warm Clothing** – *For each occupant. It’s especially important have head cover, heavy gloves or mittens, and warm boots. A lot of body heat is lost through your extremities.*
- **High Calorie Non-Perishable Food** – *Candy, canned nuts, raisins, etc. are a good source. In addition, if you can heat water and take along a cup, spoon, tea bags, hot chocolate, cup of soup, etc., are excellent. Remember a can opener.*
- **Drinking Water** – *Make sure it is protected from freezing.*
- **Catalytic Heater** – *Make sure you know how to use the heater to prevent fire or dangerous fumes. Proper ventilation is essential.*
- **Two Empty Coffee Cans** for your candles and/or solid fuels.

- **Matches, Candles, or Solid Fuels** – Use caution so you don't start a fire. Proper ventilation is necessary to prevent oxygen starvation. Let some fresh air into the vehicle. Do not go to sleep with a candle or solid fuel burning in your car.
- **Pocketknife and first aid kit** – Make sure any special medicines that you or your family members require are included. Include a first aid manual with the kit.
- **Facial or Toilet Tissue**
- **Transistor Radio** – Include extra batteries.
- **Flashlight or signal light** – Include extra batteries
- **Battery Booster cables**
- **Signal Flares**
- **Shovel**
- **Two tow chains**
- **Sand or Cat litter** – Can be used for traction if you get stuck.
- **Basic Repair tools**
- **Axe** – Can be used to cut tree branches to put under tires for traction.

Hiking and Hunting Safety

Hiking and hunting are both excellent sports to spend off duty time doing, but all too often people get caught out in woods unprepared for nature's worst.

- *Always let someone know where you are going and when you will be back.*
- *Take a friend or partner whenever possible, the buddy system is the best way to enjoy nature.*

- *Have a basic survival kit. Things to include are: A Knife, Matches, Rope, Water, Compass, Mirror, Whistle, Flashlight, Emergency Blanket, and High Calorie Foods*
- *Mark your trail whenever possible or make mental notes of your whereabouts in relation to a fixed object (i.e. a mountain, stream, power lines, etc..)*
- *Bring clothing for nature's changes; rain gear is always a sure bet.*
- *Remain calm if you get lost, panicking can put yourself in further danger. Stay put and collect your thoughts; try to remember your trail. If it gets dark, seek shelter and use your survival kit.*

Hunting – Listed below are several safety tips to make hunting an enjoyable experience that you'll live to do again and again:

- *Treat every Gun as if loaded*
- *Always maintain muzzle control of your firearms; keep the barrel pointed in a safe direction away from other people.*
- *Never carry a loaded firearm in a vehicle.*
- *Do not shoot your firearm in the direction of buildings or populated areas to include livestock.*
- *Always be sure of your target, do not shoot at noises in the brush, it could be your hunting buddy.*
- *Wear hunter orange out in the field; check your local state hunting regulations for the requirements.*
- *Dress for extreme weather conditions, it is usually raining or snowing during hunting season so be prepared.*
- *Have a basic survival kit with you.*

- *If possible use the buddy system and hunt with a partner.*

SNOW FALLS GENTLY -- PEOPLE DONT!

☞ The front porch and steps are no place for winter sports! Get rid of snow and sprinkle icy spots with salt, sand, or an approved de-icing compound.

☞ When walking on icy sidewalks or streets, keep your body position slightly forward and put your feet down flat, not on the heel. Take short steps. Be sure your footwear fits the weather conditions as well as your feet!

☞ Snow is a neat thing on a ski slope but not on the bottom of your shoes. Clean them carefully upon entering a building. Slush on your soles can cause you to slip or fall.

☞ To keep from falling, hold onto the stair railings (both inside and out). Watch out for entranceways (they may be slippery with slush tracked in from outside) and work areas exposed to the elements, such as loading docks.

☞ Be careful when crossing street side snowdrifts or icy curbs. Oncoming traffic may not be able to stop in time if you slip and fall onto the street.

MISC. WINTER SAFETY



Brush Up On Snow Blower Safety

Before the snow needs to be brushed from your path is a good time to brush up on snowblower safety. The safety office encourages everyone to know the rules of safety before you actually need to use the blower. Snow blowers are potentially dangerous machines that need to be used carefully and with respect for their moving parts.

There are two basic types of snow blowers. A single-stage blower whirls the gathering/blowing auger at a very high speed. The two-stage blower has an additional auger for throwing snow out of the path. Though these usually are more completely enclosed, they can injure fingers. Exposed gears drive chains and belts can also cause injuries.

- If the system is entirely new to you, read the instruction manual and its safety precautions before attempting to assemble or start the blower. It's surprising in how many instances the instruction manual isn't the top priority when it should be.
- When snowfall is predicted, inspect the area to be cleared of snow and remove objects that may cause personal injury, property damage or damage to the machine. Check the area again before operating the blower. Use a shovel to remove snow that may contain large stones and scraps of metal. Objects other than snow will usually be thrown farther than the snow discharge, so be alert to where the discharge chute is directed.
- Electric snow blowers have their own hazards. The electric motor is powerful enough to cause injury, and the addition of electricity is another potential hazard. Always know where the cord is when using an electric snow blower. If the electric cord becomes caught in the machine and is severed, severe shock or electrocution can result.

- To ensure optimum and safe performance, keep the snow blower in good condition. Check the engine oil level before starting. Check the adjustment and operation of the clutch, blower system, and chute positioning before each operating session. Even the tires need proper inflation for good performance. Be sure that the power cord of an electric snow blower is in good condition.
- Know how to stop the machine quickly and shut the engine off.
- To avoid back injury, get help if you must lift the blower to and from its storage place.
- Ensure that you wear all the appropriate Personnel Protective Equipment. Gloves protective goggles and sturdy, non-skid boots, etc.
- Do not consume alcoholic beverages before or while operating a snowblower.
- Be especially careful on slopes and slippery terrain.
- Before allowing a youngster to handle snow removal, carefully consider the young person's age and maturity. Physical ability to handle the machine is important, but so are maturity and the ability to make good judgment decisions. Personal injury and property damage can easily result from errors in judgment.
- Keep all shields in place and keep hands and feet away from all moving parts. When a hand or foot is caught in any part of the snow blower, serious injury is likely to occur.
- If it is necessary to operate the engine in a garage or other enclosed space, open the doors and windows to provide sufficient ventilation.

- Never attempt to clear debris from the machine, make adjustments or change the throw direction of the discharge chute (unless a control is provided for this purpose near the handle) without first shutting off the engine and disconnecting the spark plug wire.
- If the thrower is electrically powered, unplug the power cord.
- Always check the fuel level before each use to avoid refilling the tank in the midst of plowing while the engine is hot. Wipe off any gasoline spills and be sure the tank cap is on snugly.
- Don't let people or pets walk or stand in the path of the blower's discharge. Not only can it hurl snow at high speed; it can also pick up ice, stones and other hard objects.
- Before pulling the starter rope, stand firmly, but keep your feet a safe distance from the auger.
- Don't leave the blower running unattended. Learn how to stop the engine quickly in case of emergency.
- Never loan your snow blower to anyone unfamiliar with its operation or with the safety rules governing it.
- Don't allow children or young teenagers to operate it.

It is always best to know the proper operation and safety tips of snow blower operations to prevent any unwanted mishaps. Snow can be a lot of fun, however, the injuries that result from the careless operation of machines to remove it, or navigate it, are not.

Snow Shoveling Safety

It's snow time again, but it's NO time to have a back injury. Many of us will need to shovel

snow from our driveways and sidewalks this winter. With proper body mechanics, you can avoid a painful back injury.

The area most vulnerable to injury is the lower back. The muscles and bone joint structure of the lower back can come under tremendous strain during many activities, including snow shoveling.

When you shovel snow, remember to observe these pointers:

- ☐ Know your limits. Rest often. Over doing it can cause sore muscles, falls and heart attacks.
- ☐ Use a lightweight shovel. If you lift a five and one-quarter pound shovel 200 times to clear a walk, you've lifted 1050 pounds of shovel alone. With a two and three-fourth pound shovel, you've reduced that by 500 pounds.
- ☐ Use a long-handled shovel to avoid strenuous unnecessary body bending.
- ☐ Shoveling snow is a repetitive motion, which increases the risk for injury if the shoveler doesn't use proper lifting techniques. Don't bend over to scoop snow onto the shovel blade. Instead, grasp the shovel handle near the upper end while you load the shovel. This limits the time you spend in a stooped position.
- ☐ When the shovel is full, lift with your leg muscles and not your back. Bend your

knees, keeping your back as straight as possible. With one hand near the end of the handle and the other as close as possible to the loaded blade; lift your load by straightening your legs.

- ☐ *Walk the snow to the place you want it to be and dump it off the shovel. Do not throw the snow with a twisting or jerking motion. That may cause pain or injury to your back.*
- ☐ Shovel at half the rate you're tempted to use. Invigorating cold air makes you want to shovel faster than you should. Most shovelers tend to lift snow waist high. Scoop it only a foot or so off the ground and then throw it out of your way.
- ☐ Wax your shovel. Then wet snow won't cling to it.
- ☐ Don't drink while working (alcohol dulls sense of fatigue).
- ☐ Shovel snow when it's fresh. Every hour that snow stands it packs down and gets heavier. In a prolonged storm, it's best to shovel twice before the snow gets packed. Also, shovel before rainfalls. Rain-soaked snow can become incredibly heavy.

Remember, be careful this winter and take good care of your back. It's the only one you will ever have.

Remember To Think Safety.